

Socio- Economic Insights Survey (SEIS) 2025

Methodology Note

Republic of Moldova | June 2025

Background

Data collection for the 2025 Socio-Economic Insights Survey (SEIS) in the Republic of Moldova commenced on May 21st. The SEIS originally employed a probabilistic stratified sampling approach, employing simple random sampling in the Municipality of Chişinău and two-stage cluster random sampling in the Rest of Moldova. Following 8 days of data collection using probability simple random sampling in the Municipality of Chişinău and 3 days of probability two-stage cluster random sampling in the rest of Moldova (excluding the Transnistrian region), the response rate was critically low—approximately 12% in the Municipality of Chişinău and 16% in the Rest of Moldova stratum, specifically in the North region.

Because SEIS in prior years relied on purposive sampling techniques, the original sampling framework for the 2025 SEIS aimed to generate a representative sample from the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) list as of May 2024. However, the list did not accurately reflect the current locations of refugees at the time of data collection (May 2025). To mitigate the risk of potential data collection challenges, several limitations of the MPCA list were identified beforehand:

- The list included only refugees with legal status in Moldova (per eligibility criteria), excluding households without legal recognition.
- It may have contained refugees who only transited through Moldova, potentially inflating the number of actual residents.
- As the list reflects the refugee population as of May 2024, it does not account for recent changes in population size and geographic distribution. These discrepancies posed operational challenges in locating respondents, delaying data collection, and risking a non-representative sample.

Coupled with the above limitations, the first two rounds of Cash Post Distribution Monitoring data collection in 2024 exhibited low phone answer rates. To mitigate the anticipated challenges of reaching survey respondents, a replacement list was prepared for both strata using a 200% buffer:

- Stratum 1 (Municipality of Chişinău): Randomly selected replacement households within the same area.
- Stratum 2 (Rest of Moldova): Randomly selected replacement households within the same Primary Sampling Unit (PSU), which were the raions.

Despite attempts to anticipate challenges associated with low response rates, there were significant challenges in the first 8 days of data collection in the Municipality of Chişinău and 3 days in Rest of Moldova reaching sampled and replacement households, including inactive sim cards, incorrect phone numbers, and refusals. The full breakdown is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Progress on the first 8 days of data collection in the Municipality of Chişinău using simple random sampling and the first 3 days of data collection in the Rest of Moldova (North region) using two-stage cluster random sampling

Stratum	Municipality of Chişinău	Rest of Moldova
Total number called	506	201
Refusals	33%	20%
Inactive sims	30%	15%
Incorrect number	5%	10%
Did not meet the criteria	9%	14%
No answer	12%	24%
Successfully conducted	12%	16%

Out of the 506 phone numbers from the main sample (201 households) and the replacement list (305 households) from the Municipality of Chişinău, only 60 households agreed to participate and were successfully interviewed, representing 12% of the total. Among the contacted numbers, 33% refused to participate in the interview, 30% had inactive SIM cards, 12% were classified as "no response" after two call attempts with no answer, 5% had incorrect phone numbers, and 9% of the households were outside the scope of the assessment. Specifically, these out-of-scope households were either not residing in the sampled PSU, had moved abroad or returned to Ukraine, or did not include any members with solely Ukrainian citizenship. Similarly, out of the 201 phone numbers contacted in the Rest of Moldova stratum, which included 115 households from the main sample and 86 from the replacement list, only 33 households agreed to participate and were successfully interviewed, representing 16% of the total. Among the contacted numbers in this stratum, 20% refused to participate in the interview, 15% had inactive SIMs, 10% had incorrect numbers, 14% did not meet the eligibility criteria, and 24% did not answer after at least two call attempts and were classified as non-responses.

Given the persistently low success rate, REACH, in coordination with UNHCR, made the decision to shift from probability sampling to non-probability purposive sampling and snowball sampling to improve response rates and ensure data collection targets could be reached within reasonable temporal, financial, and logistical bounds.

Updated Methodology

After 11 days of data collection, SEIS shifted to a non-probability sampling approach, employing stratified purposive and snowball sampling methods. The research design maintained its original stratification: the Municipality of Chişinău and the Rest of Moldova (excluding the Transnistrian

region). The Municipality of Chişinău continued to be treated as a separate raion, and the raions selected during the initial two-stage cluster sampling in the Rest of Moldova remained unchanged.

Data Collection Target Adjustments

As the original sample sizes for each stratum were based on simple random sampling (Municipality of Chişinău) and two-stage cluster sampling (Rest of Moldova), the shift to purposive sampling also required adjustments to the data collection targets for each stratum. Please see Table 2 for the final sample size per stratum after the target adjustments.

Table 2: Final sample size per stratum

Stratification	Original Sample Size	Revised Sample Size	Buffer	Sampling Type
Municipality of Chişinău	201	275	10%	Purposive
Rest of Moldova (excluding Municipality of Chişinău)	375	250	0%	Purposive
Total	576	525	--	--

After the sample size adjustments, the final sample is set at 525 interviews across both strata.

Stratum 2: Rest of Moldova Sample Size Adjustment

Initially, the sample size for the Rest of Moldova was increased to 375 surveys to account for the design effect of two-stage cluster sampling. This increase considered intra-cluster correlation (ICC), 0.06 value, estimated based on prior IMPACT assessments and cluster size, which was selected to be 5, to preserve the integrity of probability sampling. However, with the decision to shift to purposive sampling, the previously calculated sample size for the Rest of Moldova was no longer applicable as the design effect was no longer relevant to the adjusted sampling methodology.

The original list of sampled raions and settlements selected for the Rest of Moldova stratum during the two-stage cluster sampling was retained, and a proportional decrease was applied across all settlements. This decrease was by a factor of 0.67, approximately equivalent to a reduction of one third of the original sample size, resulting in a revised target of 250 interviews for the Rest of Moldova. Due to rounding, the sample size was brought up to 260 interviews, and it was decided to randomly exclude 10 interviews from underreached areas, specifically in the Centre and North regions, as the target in the South had already been met prior to the adjustment. Please refer to Table 3 for the list of randomly selected settlements removed from the sample.

Table 3: Randomly selected locations to be removed from the revised sample size

Region	Raion	Settlement	No. of randomly selected interviews
Center	Călărași	Hîrjăuca	1
	Criuleni	Boșcana	1
	Criuleni	Criuleni	1
	Hîncești	Lăpușna	1
	Ialoveni	Ialoveni	1
	Ialoveni	Costești	1
North	Dondușeni	Dondușeni	1
	Ocnița	Unguri	1
	Rîșcani	Recea	1
	Soroca	Soroca	1

As data collection was ongoing and some raions and settlements had already exceeded their new targets, these surplus interviews were redistributed to raions within the same region to cover areas where targets were underreached. While regions and their respective targets were frequently referenced, it is important to note that the sample was not stratified by region. However, the original proportions of the sample by region were maintained to ensure adequate representation of the population within each region.

Originally, the Rest of Moldova stratum sample was distributed across 24 raions. However, data collection was not conducted in Ștefan Vodă and Cantemir raions in the South region, as the target for the South had already been reached at the time of the proportional decrease and sample size revision. As a result, the sample size was redistributed across the remaining 22 raions. Please see below the sample size per raion in each of the regions.

Table 4: Final sample size for the Rest of Moldova stratum, disaggregated by region and raions

Region	Raion	Revised sample size	Total per region
Centre	Anenii Noi	4	34
	Călărași	3	
	Criuleni	2	
	Hîncești	6	
	Ialoveni	8	
	Orhei	5	
	Rezina	3	
	Ungheni	3	

North	Bălți	37	115
	Briceni	6	
	Dondușeni	10	
	Drochia	4	
	Edineț	10	
	Florești	4	
	Ocnița	30	
	Rîșcani	3	
	Soroca	11	
South	Basarabeasca	3	107
	Cahul	20	
	Cantemir	0	
	Căușeni	8	
	Ștefan Vodă	0	
	Taraclia	10	
	UTA Găgăuzia	66	
Total	256	256	

For a more detailed breakdown, please refer to Appendix 1 for the updated data collection targets for the Rest of Moldova stratum, disaggregated by region, raion, and settlement.

Stratum 1: Municipality of Chișinău Sample Size Adjustments

As the target sample size in the Rest of Moldova stratum was decreased by one third—bringing the total down to 250 interviews—the sample size for the Municipality of Chișinău was increased from 201 to 250 interviews. This adjustment is based on the rationale that the population sizes of the two strata are approximately equal. Additionally, a 10% buffer will be added to the Municipality of Chișinău stratum to help diversify the profiles of the households to be interviewed. Taking this buffer into account, the final sample size for the Municipality of Chișinău will be 275 interviews.

Respondent Identification

Given that the locations of refugee households are unknown, multiple strategies will be used to identify eligible respondents.

1. Coordination with Local Authorities:

Enumerator teams will collaborate with local authorities and social assistance staff to obtain up-to-date contact lists of refugee households currently residing in the sampled raions. After initial contact,

enumerators will obtain informed consent and verify whether the household meets the eligibility criteria for the assessment. If eligible, the interview will be conducted.

2. Outreach and Recruitment via Social Media:

To broaden outreach, information about the SEIS interviews will be shared on social media platforms commonly used by Ukrainians, such as Telegram and Facebook groups. Posts will include a registration link, a consent form, and a short screening questionnaire to confirm whether the respondent resides in the Municipality of Chişinău or Bălţi and meets the target population criteria.

Enumerators will review the list of registered individuals and arrange in-person interviews with eligible participants. Interviews will take place at the REACH office, in community centers, or in public spaces such as parks, depending on what is most convenient for the respondent.

3. Snowball Sampling:

At the end of each interview, enumerators will ask respondents if they know any other eligible refugees who may be willing to participate. If referrals are not available, the team will return to the registration list and continue scheduling interviews with other respondents.

Implications of Methodological Changes and Sample Size Revisions

The original sampling methodology was designed to ensure representativeness of the MPCA beneficiaries list as of May 2024, using probability-based approaches. Due to operational constraints, the methodology was revised to employ non-probability sampling methods. As a result, the representativeness of the data is reduced, and the findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically generalizable.

Additionally, data collection was already in progress at the time the revised sample size for the Rest of Moldova stratum was proposed. Consequently, the initial targets were exceeded in some areas. For example, 66 interviews were conducted in UTA Găgăuzia, despite the revised target being 44. Although regional disaggregation is not planned, the uneven distribution of interviews may still influence overall findings if the characteristics of respondents from overrepresented areas differ substantially from those in other parts of the country. Therefore, this context should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

Appendix 1: Final sample size for the Rest of Moldova stratum, disaggregated by region, raion, and settlement

Region	Raion	Settlement	Original sample size per settlement	Revised sample size per settlement ¹	Final sample size per settlement
		Maximovca	1	1	1
		Țițăreni	1	1	1
	Călărași	Călărași	4	3	3
		Hîrjăuca	1	0	0
	Criuleni	Boșcana	1	0	0
		Criuleni	4	2	2
	Hîncești	Călmățui	1	1	1
		Cărpineni	3	2	2
		Crasnoarmescoe	1	1	1
		Hîncești	1	1	1
		Lăpușna	1	0	0
		Leușeni	1	1	1
		Sărata-Galbenă ²	2	1	0
	Ialoveni	Bardar	2	1	1
		Costești	6	3	3
		Ialoveni	6	3	3
		Mileștii Mici	1	1	1
	Orhei	Berezlogi	1	1	1
		Orhei ³	4	3	4
	Rezina	Rezina	5	3	3
Ungheni	Ungheni	5	3	3	
North	Bălți	Bălți	55	37	37
	Briceni	Briceni	1	1	1
		Lipcani	3	2	2
		Mărcăuți ³	1	1	3
	Dondușeni	Dondușeni ²	20	12	10
	Drochia	Drochia ³	5	3	4
	Edineț	Cupcini	2	1	1
		Edineț	13	9	9
	Florești	Cunicea	2	1	1
Florești ³		2	1	3	
Mărculești ²		1	1	0	

¹ All the survey numbers and corresponding locations listed in Table 2 have been removed from the "Revised Sample Size per Settlement" column, and the revised sample size adds up to 250 interviews for the Rest of Moldova stratum.

² The target in this settlement was not reached, and the shortfall has been compensated by surplus interviews from settlements that exceeded their targets, while the sample size per region has remained unchanged.

³ The target in this settlement has been exceeded, and the surplus has been allocated to settlements that were under-reached, but the sample size per region has remained unchanged.

	Ocnița	Ocnița ⁴	10	7	12
		Otaci ⁵	30	20	17
		Săuca ⁵	1	1	0
		Unguri	3	1	1
		Vălcineț ⁵	1	1	0
	Rîșcani	Mihăileni ⁵	1	1	0
		Recea	1	0	0
		Rîșcani ⁴	3	2	3
	Soroca	Soroca ⁵	19	12	11
		Vădeni ⁵	1	1	0
South	Basarabeasca	Basarabeasca	4	3	3
		Başcalia ⁵	1	1	0
	Cahul	Burlăceni	1	1	1
		Burlacu	1	1	1
		Cahul ⁴	18	12	18
	Cantemir ⁶	Baimaclia	1	1	-
		Gotestî	1	1	
		Plopi	1	1	
		Stoianovca	2	1	
	Căușeni	Căușeni	12	8	8
		Cîrnățenii Noi ⁵	1	1	0
		Copanca ⁵	1	1	0
		Grădinița ⁵	2	1	0
		Opaci ⁵	1	1	0
		Pervomaisc ⁵	1	1	0
		Tănătari ⁵	1	1	0
		Zaim ⁵	1	1	0
	Ștefan Vodă ⁶	Carahasani	2	1	-
		Crocmaș	1	1	
		Ermoclia	1	1	
		Olănești	1	1	
		Palanca	1	1	
		Popeasca	2	1	
		Răscăieți	1	1	
		Ștefan Vodă	9	6	
		Talmază	2	1	
	Taraclia	Cairaclia ⁴	2	1	2
Taraclia ⁴		4	3	4	
Tvardița ⁴		2	1	2	

⁴ The target in this settlement has been exceeded, and the surplus has been allocated to settlements that were under-reached, but the sample size per region has remained unchanged.

⁵ The target in this settlement was not reached, and the shortfall has been compensated by surplus interviews from settlements that exceeded their targets, while the sample size per region has remained unchanged.

⁶ As data collection was ongoing in the South region, the revised sample size for this region was already achieved. Therefore, data collection was stopped, and the raions of Ștefan Vodă and Cantemir were not covered. In some other raions, such as UTA Găgăuzia, Taraclia, and Cahul, the target was exceeded.

		Valea Perjei ⁷	2	1	2	
	UTA Găgăuzia	Baurci ⁸	1	1	0	
		Beșalma	1	1	1	
		Beșghioz	1	1	1	
		Bugeac	1	1	1	
		Ceadîr-Lunga ⁷	14	9	14	
		Chiriet-Lunga	1	1	1	
		Cișmichioi ⁷	3	2	3	
		Comrat ⁷	20	13	24	
		Congaz ⁷	3	2	3	
		Dezghingea ⁸	2	1	0	
		Etulia ⁷	5	3	5	
		Vulcanеști ⁷	13	9	13	
Total				375	250	256

⁷ The target in this settlement has been exceeded, and the surplus has been allocated to settlements that were under-reached, but the sample size per region has remained unchanged.

⁸ The target in this settlement was not reached, and the shortfall has been compensated by surplus interviews from settlements that exceeded their targets, while the sample size per region has remained unchanged.